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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0002

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 092506

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2034

TAGS: PINR PGOV CI

SUBJECT: (U) KUDOS FOR SANTIAGO 000755 (C-AL9-01816)

REF: SANTIAGO 000755

Classified By: MICHAEL P. OWENS, ACTING DIR, INR/OPS. REASON: 1.4(C).

¶1. (C) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS WISH TO THANK EMBASSY FOR REFTEL, WHICH PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT INTRODUCTION TO SEBASTIN PIERA. WITH THE ELECTIONS SET FOR DECEMBER, WE ARE INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, AND THIS CABLE DID AN EXCELLENT JOB OF SUMMARIZING GENERALLY KNOWN FACTS OF PIERA'S BACKGROUND, WHILE ALSO UPDATING HIS STORY IN VERY USEFUL WAYS. WE PARTICULARLY WELCOMED THE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INFORMATION/ANALYSIS PROVIDED IN REFTEL. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE LOOK FORWARD TO MORE REPORTING IN THE MONTHS TO COME AS THE ELECTIONS APPROACH.

¶1A. (C) PARAGRAPH TWO RECONFIRMED PIERA'S BIRTHDATE, THE NUMBER OF HIS SIBLINGS, HIS EXPERIENCES LIVING ABROAD WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER DUE TO HIS FATHER'S WORK, AND HIS FAMILY'S POLITICAL CONNECTIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION OF THESE IMPORTANT FACTS, WHICH WE ARE ABLE TO THEN USE IN FINISHED INTELLIGENCE, PARTICULARLY IN A PAPER SCHEDULED FOR PUBLICATION LATER THIS YEAR.

¶1B. (C) PARAGRAPHS THREE AND FOUR CONFIRMED PIERA'S EDUCATION AND ADDED THAT HE EARNED A PRESTIGIOUS AWARD AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN SANTIAGO, A TIDBIT THAT PROVIDED A MORE COMPLETE PICTURE OF PIERA IN HIS FORMATIVE YEARS. WE ALSO APPRECIATED THE INDICATION THAT HIS BROTHER, JOSE, STUDIED AT ONE OF THE SAME UNIVERSITIES SEBASTIAN ATTENDED. THIS IS HELPFUL IN GAUGING SEBASTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS BROTHER, ESPECIALLY DURING THE CURRENT BANKING SCANDAL, WHICH INVOLVES THE TWO OF THEM. WE ALSO APPRECIATED THE BIOGRAPHICAL TIDBIT REGARDING PIERA'S WORK FIGHTING POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA, WHICH ADDS DEPTH TO OUR ANALYSIS OF HIS CHARACTER.

¶1C. (C) PARAGRAPH SIX WAS PARTICULARLY USEFUL WITH ITS REFERENCES TO PIERA'S TIES TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND HIS CURRENT CAMPAIGN. THESE INSIGHTS WILL ALSO ADD TEXTURE TO OUR ANALYSES, AS WE PROVIDE BIOGRAPHIC REPORTS AHEAD OF THE ELECTIONS.

¶1D. (C) THE REFERENCE TO PIERA'S CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN PARAGRAPH NINE WAS VERY HELPFUL, AND ADDED TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HIS CAMPAIGN STRATEGY.

¶1E. (C) PARAGRAPHS ELEVEN AND TWELVE INCLUDED AN EXCELLENT RUN-DOWN OF PIERA'S CURRENT SCANDAL WOES AND PROVIDED MUCH-NEEDED CONTEXT.

¶1F. (C) WE ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN THE IDENTITIES OF AND DYNAMICS SURROUNDING PIERA'S INNER CIRCLE. PARAGRAPH THIRTEEN HELPED EXPAND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PIERA FAMILY'S INVOLVEMENT IN HIS CAMPAIGN.

¶1G. (C) WE ESPECIALLY APPRECIATED THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPHS FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN. THESE INSIGHTS INTO PIERA'S PERSONALITY WERE EXTREMELY HELPFUL TO OUR BIOGRAPHICAL WORK AND PROVIDED A MUCH-NEEDED INFUSION OF NEW INFORMATION. NOTABLY, PIERA'S BEHAVIOR IN MEETINGS WAS

CHARACTERIZED, WHICH WAS A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE WE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN ABLE TO CAPTURE. COUPLED WITH CONFIRMATION THAT PIERA IS STILL JETTING ABOUT THE COUNTRY IN HIS PRIVATE HELICOPTER, THESE TWO PARAGRAPHS DID MUCH TO FILL IN IMPORTANT DETAILS ABOUT HIS PERSONALITY AND HABITS.

TH. (C) FINALLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EMBASSY FOR ITS COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 16. THE READ-OUT OF THE CHILEAN PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF PIERA AND OF HIS CAMPAIGN,S FORTUNES WAS VERY USEFUL.

CLINTON